

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

XXXXXX – by E mail

Date: 17th January 2022

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2022 / 022

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 7th January 2022 concerning Romance Fraud.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

1. How many reports of 'romance fraud*' has your police department received in the last year?
2. How much money did the victims of romance fraud lose as a result of the scams?

**Romance fraud is when a person is tricked into an online relationship where the other party is just trying to extort money fraudulently.*

Our response:

The information that you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval.

There is no specific Crime Code (or designated Home Office crime recording category) by which it is possible to record offences related to Romance Fraud.

Offences of this nature would be recorded on our system(s) within a number of different Crime Categories, such as Fraud, Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society, Theft from The Person and Other Theft. In reality however, such offences could potentially be recorded in a number of other crime categories besides those mentioned.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The ascertaining of the information you require would only be possible by physically searching for and then reading every crime occurrence recorded call and attendance log made for every officer in the Force during the 5 year period you are requesting.

In the last calendar year, Wiltshire Police have recorded the following crime volumes for the specific categories mentioned :-

Fraud	12
Micellaneous Crimes Against Society	781
Theft from the Person	181
Other Theft	643
TOTAL	1617

Please note

- It should be noted that the 12 cases above are the only Fraud cases currently recorded for the last 12 months by Wiltshire Police. The vast majority of Fraud cases are referred to the national body Action Fraud for investigation – we do not have access to these records and would have to seek them from Action Fraud.
- It may also be the case that the value of money lost is not even recorded within the crime offence log – this may not have been recorded (or known) at the time the crime was recorded and some victims are loathed to admit the level of money they have actually lost. It might be the case that the original paper files would need to be retrieved from our archives and read in order to try and ascertain any information that may be missing and not recorded on our system(s).

Even allowing a very generous 5 minutes per record and only considering those records on our systems (NOT those held by Action Fraud), I am absolutely confident that to locate, retrieve and extract the information you seek would by far exceed the time obligations upon this authority to comply, and in so doing would exceed the fees limits. This is set at £450 calculated at a flat rate of £25 per hour for those work activities comprising of confirming the information is held, locating it, retrieving it and extracting it.

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request in respect to a more manageable level. However, due to the difficulties outlined above, I cannot see how this can be achieved in this particular case.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption applicable to the information requested is:

Section 12: Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

In accordance with section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this particular request.

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered in the light of your request within the time constraints applicable under the legislation.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Penny
Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



Force Disclosure Unit

Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN
Telephone 101 ext 62005

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing to the:

Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,
London Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire,
SN10 2DN

Email at disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk.

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original FoI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk